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Identical letters dated 19 August 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to bring to the attention of the Security Council matters relating to peace and security in South Asia, in the context of Pakistan-India relations and the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

India's military deployments against Pakistan last year had led to a sharp escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India and caused justified anxiety in the international community, including within the Security Council. Fortunately, realizing the futility and danger of such confrontation and the serious global concern it evoked, India announced, in October 2002, a partial withdrawal of its troops deployed in forward positions on the international border with Pakistan. Pakistan welcomed this and reciprocated the pullback of troops along the international border.

Following accommodating statements on both sides earlier this year, and telephonic contacts between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, certain steps were taken to reduce tensions and improve the political environment. Pakistan and India have since restored diplomatic relations at the level of High Commissioners (Ambassadors) and resumed a bus service between Lahore and New Delhi. Pakistan has proposed the resumption of rail links. Expert-level talks on aviation matters are scheduled later this month. Parliamentary and business delegations have exchanged visits. Interaction has also taken place between civil society groups.

However, these small steps to gradually revert to the pre-military mobilization status (December 2001) should not create the incorrect impression that there has

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been forward movement in resolving the outstanding differences between India and Pakistan, especially over Jammu and Kashmir. Official talks between the two sides have not been resumed. The security environment in South Asia remains fragile and volatile. India has not withdrawn its forces from the Line of Control in Kashmir. Sporadic exchange of fire continues along the line. Indian leaders continue to make periodic threats against Pakistan.

In the context of upcoming state elections and next year's national elections in India, Indian political parties and leaders have revived their belligerent posture towards Pakistan and may take other steps that could heighten tensions and revive the danger of another conflict.

The recent congregations of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (Raipore on 18 July) have, for example, not only issued belligerent rhetoric against Pakistan; they have called for the construction of a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhia and the destruction of over 3,000 other mosques across India. An electoral campaign based on hate against India's Muslims and Pakistan does not auger well for peace and stability on the sub-continent.

India's persistent refusal to resume bilateral dialogue and agree to a serious, substantive and sustained engagement for peaceful resolution of all issues, notably the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, should be a cause of concern for the international community. So far there is no talk about talks, no road map and no signpost for moving towards a genuine process for peace and security in South Asia.

Unofficial exchanges cannot be a substitute for official talks. Pakistan has persistently called on India to resume the composite dialogue at the Foreign Secretaries level. Pakistan remains ready to pursue the composite dialogue on the basis of the previously agreed agenda, which includes all issues of mutual concern, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's approach is guided by a sense of responsibility and a desire to lower tensions and prevent conflict. A bilateral dialogue is not a favour, which either country would bestow on the other. India's demand that Pakistan make unilateral concessions to its position is designed to frustrate not facilitate a dialogue. India's aversion to talks is premised on seeking concessions from Pakistan unilaterally through coercive means. A delay in opening such a dialogue is bound to strengthen the positions of extremists and complicate the search for acceptable mutual solutions to outstanding issues. These trends may accentuate in view of the ascendancy of militant Hindu extremist sentiments within the Indian polity now being manifested in the pre-electoral play in India.

Obviously, a resolution of Jammu and Kashmir is central to the promotion of normal and friendly relations between Pakistan and India. It is the principal item on the agreed agenda for bilateral talks.

The President of Pakistan has advanced several proposals to address the Kashmir dispute. Recently, President Musharraf reiterated the proposal for observance of a ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir as well as an accompanying cessation of hostilities within the Kashmir Valley. The institution of the ceasefire can be achieved immediately if both Governments were to issue instructions to their forces along the Line of Control to halt fire. Such a ceasefire along the Line of Control should be acceptable to India since it would set at rest India's frequently voiced fears that cross Line of Control movement takes place

under the cover of fire across the Line of Control. Moreover, Pakistan is agreeable to an impartial international monitoring mechanism on both sides of the Line to verify the claims made by India of cross Line infiltration. We also favour the strengthening of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

Pakistan desires that India should concurrently take steps to reduce and eliminate repression and human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir, release Kashmiri prisoners, ease travel restrictions imposed on Kashmiri leaders, enabling them to visit abroad to present their point of view, and reduce the level of its forces deployed in Kashmir. In turn, Pakistan is confident that the Kashmiri freedom fighters, the Kashmiri Mujahideen, will reciprocate by refraining from acts of violent resistance against Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir. The indigenous Kashmiri armed resistance in Occupied Kashmir is a corollary to the repression and India's military operations against Kashmiris.

Pakistan is also prepared to discuss and evolve confidence-building measures with India, both political and military, in the conventional and nuclear fields. Several confidence-building measures were in fact agreed upon between the two sides in Lahore in 1999. A start can be made to promote and implement these agreed measures.

Pakistan is concerned that India's belligerent posture and propaganda is accompanied by a massive build-up of its conventional and non-conventional military capabilities. The Indian defence budget has increased by over 50 per cent during the last three years. India plans to acquire new advanced weapons worth over $100 billion over the next several years. Such a build-up of India's military capabilities will not only encourage its belligerent posture towards Pakistan and other neighbours; it will intensify India's desire to impose its political and military domination over South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. India's acquisition of advanced weapons is primarily designed to undermine regional strategic stability. Any erosion of the strategic deterrence, which currently exists between Pakistan and India, would increase the danger of Indian aggression against Pakistan. Members of the Security Council, especially the five permanent members, have a special responsibility to prevent these developments, which can threaten regional as well as global peace and security.

In context of the dangers outlined in the preceding paragraphs, Pakistan believes the international community must urgently call on India to respond positively to Pakistan's proposals to revive the bilateral dialogue, install an effective ceasefire along the Line of Control, halt threatening statements and propaganda, stop its repression in Kashmir, reduce military deployments in the disputed State and evolve confidence-building measures with Pakistan to reduce the risk of accidental or deliberate conflict. Above all, Pakistan is convinced that a peaceful and just solution for the Jammu and Kashmir dispute holds the key to peace and stability in South Asia.

The international community, especially the United Nations and the Security Council, have a vital responsibility to promote conditions of stability and peace in South Asia, a region inhabited by one fifth of humanity. It is Pakistan's earnest hope that the United Nations and the Security Council will make all possible endeavours to facilitate resumption of a serious, substantive and sustained dialogue between

India and Pakistan for peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues, notably the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

(*Signed*) Munir **Akram**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative